

THE WHOLE DUTY OF A GOSPEL
MINISTER, EMPHATICALLY POINTED
OUT IN THE SACRED TEXT, AND
BRIEFLY DELINEATED.

A 4
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE
O R D I N A T I O N
O F

The Rev. Mr. JOHN LAWSON,

TO THE CONGREGATION OF
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,
AT SPITTLE, NEAR
BERWICK UPON TWEED.

By the Rev. R. COWAN of Newcastle.

Presens avolat, altera
Instat vita: viam non aliam Pater
Ducentem huc docuit, nisi
Quæ cari posita est in cruce Filii.

NEWCASTLE:

Printed by T. ANGUS, Trinity-Corner,
St. Nicholas' Church Yard. 1782.

THE WHOLE OF THE
MOUNTAIN
OUT OF THE
MOUNTAIN

THE MOUNTAIN

THE MOUNTAIN

THE MOUNTAIN



THE MOUNTAIN

THE MOUNTAIN

THE MOUNTAIN

THE MOUNTAIN

THE MOUNTAIN

SERMON, &c.

TITUS, II. 7, 8.

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

PAUL's Epistles to Timothy and Titus contain a choice collection of apostolical canons, excellently calculated for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. It

B

would

would have been well for the church of *Christ*, had these rules been more strictly observed, in all past ages. And whenever the happy time comes of God's pouring down his Holy Spirit upon his Zion, the city of our solemnities, then she will be adjusted according to the divine system and plan, and the obedience of every rank and class of men in her will be rendered, in some measure, canonical. Her stately palaces, high towers, and her impregnable bulwarks, will appear in all their magnificence and glory; and she shall be a blessing, renown, and praise on the earth.

Titus, unto whose perusal and care this Epistle was first committed, was originally a Gentile, converted by the ministry of Paul; and attended him from Syria to the synod at Jerusalem, [*Gal. ii. 1, 3.*]—and afterwards he became a notable evangelist, of eminent piety, and disinterested zeal, in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and him crucified; which procured him a friendly reception at Corinth, where Paul had sent

sent him. He came into Macedonia, and informed Paul of the state of the Corinthian church, and was returned to her with a Second Epistle; [2 Cor. vii. 6. xii. 18.]—but afterwards appointed to minister in Crete, an island in the Mediterranean sea, north of Egypt and west of Syria, 286 miles in length and 55 in breadth; originally peopled by Canaanites, in the days of Joshua, and by Grecians after the Trojan war; at first famed for probity, and afterwards for dissipation and deceit. There Titus was to set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every church (Tit. i. 5.) And from thence he propagated the Gospel into the neighbouring islands.

The great scope of this and the two preceding epistles is the same. In this Titus receives a perfect standard and rule for adjusting all his ministrations, which he was to keep in his view all the days of his life; as, the people and rulers in Israel were enjoined to read on the Law of God of old. It is also profitable

for us, and all ranks of men, unto the end of the world, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

In this chapter he is 1. Exhorted to preach nothing but the sincere and salutary truths of the Gospel. 2. To apply the same particularly to people of every sex, age, and order; that they may discharge mutual offices, and relative duties, incumbent upon them, in a holy, discreet, and becoming manner: And that he would confirm them in the faith, and encourage them to the study and practice of good works, by his own example. 3. Gospel holiness, or new obedience, is enforced, by an argument of all others the most powerful and constraining; *viz*, The sovereignty and superabundance of the grace of God, manifested in our redemption by Jesus Christ, as declared in the Gospel (v. 11.) 4. All which is most pleasantly and beautifully concluded, in an epitome or sententious account of what Christ has done for us, and his design therein (v. 14.)

(v. 14.) And, finally, the Apostle re-inculcates the duty of insisting much upon these evangelical themes, and to reprehend offenders, in the name and authority of the church's head.

In our text, the whole business or work of the ministerial vocation is briefly comprized: And at the same time, not excluding, but implying what manner of persons all private Christians ought to be, both in point of faith and manners. All that own Jesus Christ as their Lord, are bound to believe his doctrine, and do his commandments: and, consequently, to study an entire conformity, in profession and practice, unto that Gospel which teacheth nothing but holiness in heart and all manner of conversation.

For the sake of brevity, we shall supersede any particular division of the several parts of this copious subject, together with the critical explication of terms used in it, and endeavour to insert and comprehend the same in the prosecution of the discourse. The words

furnish us with the following general proposition, *viz.* That gospel ministers ought to exhibit purity of doctrine, and exemplary holiness, that they may both edify their hearers, and stop the mouths of adversaries.

First. We shall, offer a short specimen of Gospel Doctrine.

Secondly, Describe and illustrate its properties.

Thirdly, Shew in what manner we ought to handle the doctrines of Revelation.

Fourthly, Urge the necessity of bringing forth the exemplary fruits of divine truths, in our conversation, in the view of the church, and of the world.

Fifthly, The advantage we shall derive from an uniform and consistent tenor of doctrine and life; or the motive proposed to induce us to the study thereof.

Lastly, We shall conclude the discourse with some inferences for improvement.

First

First. We proposed to offer a short specimen of Gospel Doctrine.

And, 1. The Gospel, as it signifies good news, or joyful tidings, has been always the same, since the first proclamation of mercy, in the promise [Gen. iii. 15.] tendered by Jehovah, in the character of Mediator, for the hope and consolation of our first parents, convicted of their desert, and cast down under a sense of guilt. Although it has been administered at sundry times, in several portions, by degrees, and under diverse forms and mediums of conveyance, yet it has been the same in all the four ages of the world; *viz.* from God's making the promise to Adam, concerning the seed of the woman: his entering into covenant with Abraham: and from Abraham until Moses: and from Moses until Christ; who hath given unto us the last form of his testament, ratified with his own blood. Like a pure river of water, springing from the sovereign love and good will of God to sinful and miserable men, it has hitherto continued
its.

its course, and passed through diverse channels, until it hath reached us ; and hath been, is, and will be the very same unto the end of time, as to matter and substance, the stipulated condition of conveyance ; viz. the death of Jesus, and grand scope and end thereof, the manifestation of the glory of divine perfections, and the accomplishment of our eternal salvation. 2. The *Euangelion* in the New Testament, which we translate *Gospel*, is used sometimes by profane writers, not only to signify lucky or fortunate news, but also a sacrifice : And although it be true that all the glad tidings of life and salvation, published by revelation to perishing sinners, are owing to the Son of God becoming our atonement and propitiation ; yet the Evangelists and Apostles did not borrow the term from them, but from the seventy Interpreters, who translate the Hebrew word *bisser*, *Euangelizesthai* ; and *bessora*, *Euangelion* : because they signify the same thing ; viz. Matter of joy, and of celebrating our deliverance and felicity, effected

effected by a notable victory or atchievement of the Divine Arm.—In this sense the word is used [*Isa. xl. 9.*] *Bebasse-
reth Tſion*: and the seventy *Euangelizo-
menos, Zion*; i. e. Zion that bringeth,
announceth, or declareth good tidings.
And the particulars of the glad tidings of
the gospel of the grace of God, by Isaiah,
to the church may be seen at large in the
chapter referred to; wherein is declared
the infinite majesty of God our Saviour:
—his omnipotent arm that rules accord-
ing to equity, and always secures a re-
ward of grace for his own people, and
a cup of fury and trembling for his
enemies:—his pastoral relation to his
church, and peculiar care of her:—his
matchless wisdom:—his all-sufficiency;
and his tender mercies.—Soul-strength-
ening and reviving consolations, to such
as wait upon him as their own God and
Saviour, by faith and hope in his word.

3. Christ and his apostles chose rather
to notify the New Testament ministry
by the word *Euangelion* (Gospel) than
any other word:—Such as *Thoga*, sig-
nifying

nifying a Law [*Isa.* ii. 3.] ; being so called because it is the law of faith [*Rom.* iii. 27.]——1. To distinguish more clearly betwixt the doctrine of Moses and the doctrine of Christ [*John*, i. 17.] 2. That the Jews called *Ellenistai*, might know that the evangelists and apostles did not invent any new kind of doctrine ; but only published the glad tidings of grace under this designation ; which had been so often in former times promised by the prophets [*Rom.* i. 2.] 3. That the doctrine of the Gospel, by this title alone, might be better known to the Greeks, and rendered more amiable and acceptable to them, and all other nations. According to the apostle [*Rom.* x. 15.] *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.* In short, the Gospel is so called, because it is a divine oration or sermon, concerning our redemption out of the hands of all our enemies ;—the remission of our sins ;—and righteousness and eternal life by Christ.

Christ, as our Mediator.—[*Isa. lxi. 1.*] *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*—[*Rom. ili. 21.*] But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: (ver. 22.) Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.—[*Luke, xxiv. 46, 47.*] Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.—Repentance is as much of grace as remission of sin; both are promised, [*Zech. xii. 10.*—*Ezek. xvi. 63.*] and both are to be preached in Christ's name, because purchased by him; [*Acts, ii. 38.*] and though repentance be enjoined as a duty of the

the royal law, this does not meditate against, nor invalidate its freedom, as a grace promised by God, purchased by his Son, and infused into us by his Spirit; but may serve to admonish us,

1. Of the Divine Legislator's legal authority over us, notwithstanding our having lost all ability to do his commandments.
2. That all pharasaical prejudices and self-righteousness, must be renounced; and that this is to be done, not in our own, but in Christ's strength.
3. That, while Christ is knocking at the door of our hearts, and the Spirit striving with, or awakening our consciences, we ought not to resist their operations, nor quench their motions.

4. The Gospel in its first or Old Testament dispensation, is to be considered with relation unto the promise of a Mediator. In this respect, the Gospel is said to be promised before, by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. [*Rom. i. 1, 2.*] Or, with regard to the accomplishment of that promise, [*Heb. i. 1, 2.*]

the

the doctrine of the New Testament is no less *Euangelia* (i. e. a promise) than the gift of the Holy Ghost. [Acts, ii. 39.—Gal. iii. 14.] And our Lord Jesus Christ is the substance, *alpha* and *omega*, of this gospel; the yea and amen of all the promises. And unto him gave all the prophets witness. And with the apostle, we ought to desire to know nothing among our hearers but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—Thus it has been, and ever will be, the same gospel, as to matter, substance, and grand design: viz. That our adorable Redeemer should become man, of the seed of the woman, condemn and subdue Satan and all other enemies; and that by his death he would purchase our justification, sanctification, and eternal salvation, are all evidently imported in that first promise. [Gen. iii. 15.] —From Adam, as receiving this glorious intimation, the gospel hath glided down in the line or channel of the church unto this day. First in the family of Seth, Gen. iv. 26; of Enoch, chap. v. 24; of Noah and Shem, ix. 26; of Abraham, xi. 35;

of Isaac, xxvi. 4; of Jacob, xxviii. 14; and of his posterity, unto Moses; and then by all the prophets, until the commencement of the New Testament era: when the gospel which God had before preached to Abraham, began to be published among all nations. *Gal. iii. 8.*—In past ages, and particularly under the Old Testament state, the rays of redeeming love were reflected from the glasses of remote predictions, promises, various types, and sacrifices, ordinary and extraordinary: The chief scope of which was, to prefigure Christ as to come in the flesh, to make peace by the blood of his cross, and bring in an everlasting righteousness: And likewise, to foreshew the superior blessings and great advantages, reserved for us in these last days; which are called *good things to come* (*Heb. x. 1.—Col. i. 17.*); and *better things*, (*Heb. 11. 40.*)—Not indeed in an absolute and moral sense, as if the redemption we have now by Jesus Christ was better as to its nature and kind, than what Old Testament saints enjoyed;

enjoyed; but better in point of duration, manner of communication, and degree of light; or fulness, evidence, and efficacy to all sorts of people, unto the end of time. To this purpose, the latter economy is styled a *better testament*, (*Heb. vii. 22.*) *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

5. Under this testament we are directed to behold Him as the *Yes* and *Amen* of all the promises (*1 Cor. i. 20.*); the truth of the legal types; and the body or substance of the shadows (*John i. 17.* *Col. ii. 17.*) in whom all things predicted of the promised Messiah, in the Old Testament, are accomplished. (*1 Cor. iii. 18.*) But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. As the bright morning star, and sun of righteousness, he has been the light of the church in all ages; but now he is her light and glory in a more eminent and illustrious degree than ever.

6. The gospel, taken largely, or in its outmost extent, not only points out the grace, life, and salvation we have by Jesus, as a Saviour; but takes in the whole council of God recorded in revelation, and whatsoever doctrine, history, promise, precept or threatening, are any how connected with or subservient unto the plan of our redemption. Therefore, the whole will of God, revealed to Adam in a state of innocence, in the covenant of works, or to his posterity since the fall, in the new covenant dispensation of grace; is to be explained and preached unto the people. And particularly, we ought to teach and preach our original apostacy and guilt, in the first Adam [*Rom. v. 19.*]; our utter inability to recover ourselves out of that state of sin and misery;—being all as the new-born infant [*Ezek. xvi. 2,--6.*];—without strength [*Rom. v. 6.*];—dead in trespasses and sins—and under the curse, while we are of the works of the law [*Gal. iii. 10.*]: Therefore, we can never be justified by the law in the

the presence of an absolute God. And moreover, that the Son of God (who is very God, for he thought it no robbery to be equal with God) hath interposed betwixt us and an offended Deity, as the only Mediator, the true Messias that is called Christ; and hath assumed our nature of the seed of the woman, that he might lay his hand upon both parties, and bring God and man together, in an everlasting covenant of peace and friendship, that had been separated by sin from one another: And that, for this end, he fulfilled the law of a broken covenant, suffered the penalty thereof, brought in an everlasting righteousness, died the accursed death for us, rose again, according to the scriptures, and is now exalted, as the prophet, priest, and king of his Church, or as a prince and a Saviour; not only to command repentance and remission of sins to be preached unto all nations as a duty, but to give repentance and remission of sins to whomsoever he pleaseth: And, finally, that he shall come again at the last day, to judge

the world, and give eternal life to the righteous; and to punish the wicked with everlasting destruction: And thereby he shall conclude the present manner of administration, his work as Mediator, and every plot of Providence on earth; and so deliver up the kingdom unto the Father, that God may be all in all.

The *Second* head is to describe and illustrate some of the properties of the Gospel Doctrine.

1. It is of God, as to its original institution and appointment. It is not the product of the artful contrivance of imposture, but God is the sole Author thereof: [*Rom. i. 1.*] *Paul a servant of Jesus Christ, — separated unto the gospel of God.* It is also the gospel of Jesus Christ, he being the sum, substance and scope of which it treats: (*ver. 16.*) *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.* And if of God, then consequently, it is

2. A heavenly dispensation, descending from the Father of lights, resembling the vision Paul had on his way to Damascus:

maſcus: [*Act. xxvi. 19.*] I was not
 diſobedient to the heavenly viſion, — com-
 pared with *Gal. 3. 15, 16.* It is alſo
 converſant about ſpiritual bleſſings in
 heavenly places. [*Eph. i. 3.*]

3. It is the goſpel of peace and ſalva-
 tion [*Eph. vi. 15.*] and therefore it is
 called the miniſtry of reconcili-
 ation [*2 Cor. v. 18.*] All things are of God,
 who hath reconciled us unto himſelf by
 Jeſus Chriſt, and hath given to us the
 miniſtry of reconciliation.

4. It is the goſpel of the grace of God
 [*Tit. ii. 11.*] flowing from his redeeming
 love and favour; and the only mean of
 making us partakers thereof; it is alſo
 free and open unto all people wherever
 it is preached [*Iſa. lv.*]

5. The doctrines of the goſpel, as
 they are indited by the Holy Ghoſt, and
 contained in the Word of God as the
 fountain, is that form of ſound words
 which we are exhorted to hold faſt in
 faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus
 [*2 Tim. i. 13.*] — But ye have obeyed
 from the heart (on upon didaches) that
 form

form of doctrine which was delivered you [Rom. vi. 17.] *Types* is a term borrowed from sculptors, or such as practice engravings. And the Scriptures, or the dictates of inspiration, are called the form of sound words. *First*. Because they are all a work of the Holy Spirit's engraving : 1. In the minds of inspired Ammanuenses : 2. Externally, in the word : 3. Internally in the hearts of the saints. *Secondly*. They carry the signature of the Holy Ghost stamp'd upon them. *Thirdly*. They are an exact and perfect exemplar or pattern of sound or salutary doctrine, contributing to the health of the church, as a spiritual body. In this sense, the doctrines of inspiration are all possessed of, and adorned with, what the Apostle in our text terms *adiaphoria*; i. e. *uncorruptness, virgin purity, integrity, and uprightness*, without all mixture of error or imperfection. Therefore,

6. Gospel doctrines are holy and profitable [2 Tim. iii. 16.]; for they are doctrines according to godliness [1 Tim. vi. 3.]

vi. 3.] And when accompanied with divine power, they are spirit and life to saints and sinners. [John vii. 39.]

7. As these doctrines are possessed of purity, so they are remarkable for what the apostle in the original text calls *sem-
notes, gravity, amiable majesty, holy mo-
desty, moderation and sincerity*, as the expression imports. As they are not adulterated with error, neither are they puffed up with vain enthusiasm; but are free from all levity and fable: therefore they are venerable, and worthy of all estimation and acceptance, and merit the imitation of all, but especially of the ministers of the gospel; as a stand-
ard of sound doctrine, and a rule of conversation or manners.

Which brings us to the *Third* head; which is, to shew in what manner we ought to handle the doctrines of inspira-
tion.

I. Not in an artful, crafty, and de-
ceitful manner, as impostors and false teachers do; wresting the Scriptures to
suit their prejudices, or according to
their

their vile lusts and ambitious views: such are said to walk in *ponurggia*, i. e. *craftiness*; which denotes a certain sort of dexterity, such as is acquired by long use or practice.—Persons of this character also handle the word of God deceitfully, or pervert and falsify the word of the Lord, turning the truth of God into a lie. But we ought to deliver the doctrines of the gospel in a simple and plain stile, and in a clear and evident manner, by *phanerosis*, i. e. a manifestation, or full and clear declaration of the truth. [1 Cor. ix. 21.]

2. Not in the bombast and swelling words of man's wisdom, or human vanity, nor in a florid and airy ostentation of rhetoric; using the persuasive or alluring words of man's wisdom, which never fail to beguile and mislead the unstable and unwary into the paths of error and immorality: But they ought to be delivered by a simple, sincere, and fervent demonstration of the truth, through which the Holy Spirit usually

exerts

exerts his power and efficacy. [1 Cor. ii. 4.] *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. The Holy Spirit, in some measure, usually countenanceth, and followeth such a manner of preaching with success. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, &c.* [2 Cor. ii. 4.]

3. They ought not to be delivered in a confused and undigested manner, disconcerting the chain of divine truth by misplacing or confounding one truth with another, by putting the law where the gospel should be, or applying the gospel where the law ought to operate as a school-master to lead us to Christ: But we ought to shew ourselves approved unto God as workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. We should study to handle the doctrines of the Law, and of the Gospel distinctly, and with great discretion; setting forth the language of the one and of the other, to every class

of men. The law says unto every man, that he is a sinner by nature [*Rom. vii. 2.*]; but the gospel declares, that Christ came into the world to save even the chief of sinners [*1 Tim. i. 15.*].—The law sayeth, that the unrighteous shall not inherit eternal life; but the gospel sayeth, that Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him [*Jer. xxiii. 6.*].—The law sayeth, thou art a debtor, and under the curse; but the gospel sayeth, Christ hath paid all my debt, and redeemed me from the curse of the law, &c. [*Gal. iii. 13.*]

4. Neither should the precious doctrines of the glorious gospel of Jesus be delivered in an irreverent, light, pedantic and trivial way; but in a grave, solid, and majestic manner; devoutly with grace in our hearts, serving God in all our ministrations acceptably, with reverence and godly fear—*Heb. xii. 28.*

The *Fourth* head is, to urge the necessity of bringing forth the exemplary fruits of divine truths in our conversation,

tion, in the view of the church and of the world.

It is necessary, in virtue of the divine authority, or on account of God's will as revealed in his own word, that not only professors of our most holy religion, but that ministers in particular, bring forth the fruits of the gospel of Jesus, which they preach.

1. That his name be not blasphemed by infidels, because of their unfruitfulness in good works, but that it may be glorified.—(*John*, xv. 8.)

Heroin is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.—

(*I. Pet.* ii. 12.) *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles,—they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

(*Ver.* 15.) *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

2. That the weak in the faith be not stumbled, as they are ready to be, when they perceive we are not fruitful in good works (which are adorning and amiable ornaments of our

D

chris-

christian and ministerial calling); or when they observe us indulging ourselves in any sinful liberty, or licentiousness whatsoever. (1 Cor. viii. 9.) *But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.* But on the other hand, that they may be established, not only by our preaching, or epistles, but by means of our exhortations, godly conference, and exemplary lives. For this purpose Paul desired to be personally present among the brethren at Rome (Rom. i. 11, 12.)

3. We are to shew ourselves examples of good works, that the church of God may be more and more edified (Matt. v. 16.)

4. That under all the buffetings of Satan, reproaches of the world, and accusations of false brethren, we may have the testimony of a good conscience, as persons that live in the faith and practice of that gospel which we preach to others. (2 Cor. i. 12.) *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly*

sin-

sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. The same Apostle sheweth himself an exemplary pattern, and worthy of our imitation (1. Cor. ix. 22,--27.) both by abstinence from things offensive to weak consciences, and by compliance with them in things indifferent; by temperance and moderation, bodily exercise, severity, and mortification of carnal affections. And this he did not to please men, but his divine Lord and Master, for the sake of propagating the gospel of our salvation.

5. That we may give a practical testimony in the eyes of the world, unto the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and demonstrate by our piety towards God, justice and charity towards all men, that we are his servants and disciples; who do not say Lord, Lord, in hypocrisy: but study to do conscientiously whatsoever he hath commanded us [*Luke vi. 46.*] And that

D 2

our

our hearers may have infallible evidences, that we are not impostors, or intruders into the Lord's vineyard and service, but such as he hath sent, and accounted worthy of the trust committed unto us [*Matt. vii. 15-20; 1 Tim. i. 12.*]: And that there is no habitual jar and inconsistency, betwixt our doctrine and life, but a beautiful coherence, uniformity and harmony throughout the whole tenor of our profession and practice; in all things adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour [*Tit. ii. 10.*] And that we make conscience of doing ourselves, what we preach and enjoin upon others; viz. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, &c. [*Phil. iv. 8, 9.*]; and thereby we will become an example of good works to believers, as Paul exhorts Timothy [*1 Tim. iv. 12.*] *Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

The *Fifth* head is, to consider the advantage we shall derive from a consistent uniformity of doctrine and life.

1. Thereby we do all that is in our power, and incumbent upon us, to give such as are of the opposite part, namely adversaries, no just ground of accusation or handle against us: Yea many will blush even to open their mouths in censuring our doctrine or conversation, when they are sensible of the soundness of the one and integrity of the other: And also such as are froward and malicious may be convicted, by appealing unto the Divine Rule for a decisive sentence in our favour. *Yea purity of doctrine and holiness of life, carry their own light and evidence along with them, that they are of God.* And although it may not be in our power to prevent diabolical malice, accusations, and reproaches; yet a holy and consistent strain of doctrine and practice with the Word of God, will expose our enemies to shame at last, and vindicate and justify

us from all they have spoken falsely against us for Christ's sake.

2. In this way we shall have the testimony of the spirit of Jesus, witnessing with our spirits and consciences, that we have not handled the Word of the Lord deceitfully, nor walked according unto the tenor and force of the law of sin and death, but according unto the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; whereby we have been made free from sin, and become servants unto God [*Rom. viii. 2.*] And likewise the testimony of the saints [*Acts xx. 26, 27.*].—And, finally, the approbation of Christ, the Judge of men and angels, at his coming the second time without sin unto salvation [*Matt. xxv. 21.*]; and shall also be in case to say, when about to resign the earthly tabernacle together with our ministrations in the militant church, [*2 Tim. iv. 7.*] *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, &c.*

Lastly,

Lastly. We conclude this discourse with some inferences for improvement.

1. From what has been said, hence see, that the Gospel may be well termed *Good news unto the sons of men.*—

1. When we seriously consider the mournful predicament in which the human race are, by reason of sin. (*Rom. v. 12.*) *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* And if sinners, then they are, under the curse of a broken law, legally dead: therefore they are called children of wrath, and morally dead; *viz. in trespasses and sins.* They are dead to God, and every thing that is good; unfit for serving him, and can do nothing but dishonour him: wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge; being born like the wild asses colt, that snuffeth up the wind [*Job. iv. 12. Jer. ii. 24.*]: prone to commit sin, as the thirsty ox greedily drinketh in water. As they are *Atheoi*, i. e. *without God,*
so

so also without hope in the world ; bankrupts and debtors, whom law and justice will not nor cannot discharge, without an adequate ransom [*Rom* viii. 3.—*Exod.* xxxiv. 7.] They are in the custody of the law, and under a legal arrestment ; and therefore they are called lawful captives [*Isa.* xlix. 24.] But the Gospel is a most gracious dispensation, wisely suited unto the deplorable condition of sinners. It proclaims the everlasting love of God as the fountain of our salvation,—the blood of Jesus as the only ransom of our immortal souls,—the sovereign channel in which the loving kindness and tender mercies of our God doth flow forth to miserable men. And faith is the gracious instrument, prepared by the Holy Spirit in elect souls, whereby they make a saving application of this blood of atonement, for their justification, sanctification, and complete redemption : This divine grace is procreated in them, by means of the glad tidings of the gospel of
of

of peace. In short, by the gospel God is graciously pleased to dwell with men on earth; and he is in the midst of them, as in Sinai, celebrating a gospel jubilee, or a season of spiritual release among them. Lo we hear the proclamation of the divine trumpet, at the mouth of the prophet Isaiah [*Isa. lxiii. 4.*] *For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.* Thereby God gives knowledge of salvation unto the people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us [*Luke, i. 77, 78.*]—And by the blood of the cross of Jesus, which the gospel displays, prisoners of justice are sent forth, out of the pit wherein is no water [*Zech. ix. 11.*]—And they that are afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ [*Eph. ii. 13.*]

2. Hence see, That God has instituted no new and different plan of our acceptance into his favour, under the New Testament, but what he revealed from
the

the beginning. Although he has been pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to manifest his gracious purposes to mankind in various manners, at different times, and by a diversity of instruments and means; nevertheless, the way of salvation itself has not been manifold, but one and the same in all ages.—The same doctrines of grace were published in remote ages of the world, that are now preached unto all nations. The Lord himself gave the first blast of of the gospel trumpet in Paradise, and it was continued by the testimony of the patriarchs, and all the prophets, until the Messenger of the covenant, as Emmanuel, descended from heaven,—visited our world, and made a more clear and distinct report of his person, mission, mediation, the doctrines of his word, and the nature of his kingdom, than ever had been done before his day. Then he proclaimed himself, as the only way of the truth and the life. And after his passion and ascension, the same gospel jubilee

lee was celebrated by the evangelists and apostles ; and their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.

3. We may infer, that they are a people highly privileged and favoured of the Lord, unto whom he sends the gospel of peace ; by which they are instructed in the knowledge of the pure doctrines of inspiration : [*Psa. lxxxix. 15.*] *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound:—Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.* [*Rom. i. 17.*]—Namely, for the justification, sanctification, and the increase of grace, in all that believe on Jesus and improve him for their righteousness and strength. In this way, they have communion with God, and walk in the light of his countenance. [*1 John, i. 5.*] *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.* We have not only access unto God, and enjoy his friendship, through the justifying and sanctifying
virtue

virtue of the blood of Jesus, while we walk before him as children of light, but the privilege and comfort of the communion of saints, as governed by the same Lord, animated by the same spirit, believing the same things, and walking by the same rule. This communion is founded upon gospel principles, whether it be considered as visible or invisible; and maintained by these sacred and relative joints and bands, appointed by the Divine Head, for the edification of his body, the church.—
 [Eph. iv. 16.]

4. We infer, That the freedom and abundance of grace, under the gospel, gives no countenance or encouragement unto any to live in sin; but the contrary: Because Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, &c. [Titus ii. 14.]—Neither is grace offered unto us, or bestowed upon us, that we may be enabled to establish our own righteousness;
 for

ror all boasting in this respect is excluded by the law of faith. [*Rom. iii. 27.*]

5. We infer, from our text, That ministers ought to be particularly careful to preach nothing but the pure, grave, and salutary doctrines of the Gospel; for these alone are entitled to the blessing of God; and thereby they will have free course, and will profit immortal souls. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, in its simplicity, is heaven's ordinance, for the salvation of mankind, sinners; and it stands in need of no artificial compositions of human wisdom, arbitrary ceremonies of superstition, nor gaudy ornaments of ancient or modern heathen eloquence to recommend it.— Human learning indeed is highly necessary, especially since the gift of inspiration ceased, and particularly the study of the Scriptures; not only in the glass of translations, but in their original language. As likewise, proficiency in the knowledge of human science, in as far as it tendeth to open our minds, enlarge our views, and enable us to

communicate the doctrines of inspiration, not in a vague, low and groveling manner, but with becoming dignity and facility: And also to arm us for the defence of truth against adversaries.— Moreover, by the assistance of such literary improvements, we may the better eschew two capital evils. 1. Wresting the scriptures unto the perdition of many. 2. Exposing the doctrines of the gospel to contempt, through our negligence and unskilfulness in handling them. But these auxiliaries of human weakness are often abused, to the discredit of the gospel, and obscuring of its light and evidence, by vicious minds and profane wits: For, says the apostle [1 Cor. ii. 14.] *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Such often infuse the poison of Arian, Socinian, and Arminian errors, into the gospel cup of salvation, which they pretend to preach; or leave their hearers to perish
in

in the old covenant bark, plying the oar of self-righteousness. [Isa. ix. 6.] *The leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed.* [Gal. iii. 10.] *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.*

6. Hence see, That ministers ought to be no less circumspect and exemplary in their conversation, than sound in their doctrine. The one ought to answer the other, as face answereth to face in a glass. Their life should be the very image of their doctrine, figuring out and describing a gospel pattern of godliness and good works, before the church and the world, that the former may be more and more edified, and the latter convinced and turned unto righteousness.

This is a duty incumbent upon them above all others, necessary for the sake of the gospel, that it may have free course and be glorified. If they are illustrious for holiness and good works, they are likely to do more good to the Mediator's kingdom than by being very

learned and profound in doctrine. — Although we talk as if we were heavenly minded, yet live as if we were of the earth, earthly; we thereby give religion a deceitful stab, as Joab did Abner: [2 Sam. iii. 27.] — *Giving great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme* (Chap. xii. 14.) — And, as a certain divine observes, “ Words without works
 “ are a language which men do not un-
 “ derstand; we speak to them in an un-
 “ known tongue: But to be beneficent,
 “ charitable, to relieve the distressed, to
 “ deliver the oppressed, to make peace
 “ among neighbours at variance; this
 “ ~~language~~ is a dialect which is *vernacular*
 “ to all the world. — This is the pro-
 “ per language of every country, and
 “ suited to the common sense of all
 “ mankind.”

7. Faithful ministers may lay their account, with neglect, opposition, contempt and contradiction, from a malevolent world, carnal professors, schismatics, and sectarian heretics. These will lie, as it were in ambush, to assault

us if we preach sound doctrine. But if we ourselves walk in the gospel path, and be constantly exercised in keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, adversaries may indeed reproach us, but cannot justly impeach us, while we give them no matter of handle to expose us, neither in doctrine nor life. Thus the Greek word *Akatagastos*, in our text, signifies a sermon or discourse which cannot be justly condemned, sneered at, or made a jest of by way of contempt. Therefore, if we, through grace, conduct ourselves, in the whole of our ministrations and life, with integrity, and are inculpable and irreprehensible in God's account, we need not regard the frowns nor revilings of the world.—[Isa. li. 7.] *Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.*

Lastly, What ministers ought to be in doctrine and life, so ought all Christians

ans to be in profession and practice.—
 The gospel does not require an uniformity in the former, and grant a dispensation to the latter, to hold what tenets they chuse, or to live as they please; but commandeth them also to hold fast the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, which is their crown, and to walk according to the gospel pattern and rule; strengthening one another's hands in the ways of righteousness, by aiding the ministry, with their prayers and other necessary succours: And if they are also persecuted for righteousness sake, they have no cause to be dejected or ashamed; for God will, in due time, plead the cause of his people, and clothe their enemies with shame as with a garment.—In short, let all Christians consider Jesus, who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, lest they be weary and faint in their minds (*Heb. xii. 3.*); being persuaded in their hearts, that the Righteous Judge will give unto all such as serve him faithfully
 in

in the militant church, and love and look for his appearing, a crown of righteousness, at his coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (2 *Tim.* iv. 8.)

F I N I S.



CORRIGENDA.

Page 11, line 3, for *Bebassereth*, read
Mebassereth.

— 11, line last, for *Thora* read *Torah*.

— 12, — 6, read, *Jews who spoke
the Greek language*.

— 14, line 1, for *melitate* read *mili-
tate*.

G.W.